

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6786

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 2065

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT NG

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE

REF: A. STATE 99551

B. NIAMEY 5566

C. NIAMEY 1326

1. AMBASSADOR WAS GRANTED AUDIENCE BY THE PRESIDENT
LT. COL. SEYNI KOUNTCHE MAY 5 AT 1000HOURS.

2. DRAWING UPON PARAGRAPHS 9-11 REFTTEL, AMBASSADOR
DESCRIBED NATURE OF MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER AND
VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE SCHEDULED FOR MAY 19. THE
PRESIDENT INDICATED THAT HE WAS IN ACCORD WITH THIS
INITIATIVE. HE FEELS THAT IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE
UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN FIND A SOLUTION TO
SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS
ARE WAITING FOR FAILURE. FAILURE OF WESTERN EFFORTS TO
BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN
PROBLEMS WOULD PROVIDE SOVIETS AND CUBANS JUST
THE OPPORTUNITY THEY ARE AWAITING. HE WAS AWARE
THAT RESULTS COULD NOT BE GUARANTEED BUT IF POSITIVE
RESULTS ARE NOT OBTAINED THE SITUATION WILL BECOME
MUCH MORE DESPERATE.

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3. ON ANOTHER MATTER, AMBASSADOR ADVISED THE
PRESIDENT OF HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE CHIEFS OF MISSION
CONFERENCE IN ABIDJAN. THE PRESIDENT WAS IMPRESSED
THAT ALLOI.S. AMBASSADORS TO AFRICA WOULD BE
MEETING IN ABIDJAN AND WAS INSPIRED TO RECITE AGAIN
THE LITTANY OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS WHICH HE CONSIDERS

VERY SERIOUS. (SEE REFTEL B). HE EMPHASIZED AGAIN THE DISTURBING (D'INQUIETUDE") PROBLEM OF THE SPANISH SAHARA AND THE COMPLEXITY OF THIS PROBLEM INVOLVING POLISARIO, MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, ALGERIA, AND THE DIFFICULTY OF ACHIEVING AGREEMENT AMONG ALL OF THESE. HE FELT THAT THE ANSWER MIGHT LIE IN AN AFRICAN SUMMIT MEETING TO ADDRESS THESE AND OTHER PROBLEMS. IN ADDITION HE CITED THE CONFLICTS THAT EXIST BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT; LIBYA AND SUDAN; LIBYA AND CHAD AS WELL AS THE SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA. HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHIOPIA ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC HE WAS OBVIOUSLY THINKING GEOPOLITICALLY. HE EXPRESSED "GREAT ADMIRATION" FOR THE LATE TEFERE BANTE BUT HELD NO BRIEF FOR MENGISTU WHO APPEARS TO BE "RADICALIZING" THE REVOLUTION. DJIBUTI IS ANOTHER SOURCE OF GREAT CONCERN. AND IF THSE ARE NOT ENOUGH, THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF ZAIRE. HE INDICATED THAT ONE COULD CONCEIVABLY DESCRIBE THE KATANGAN INSURRECTION AS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR ZAIRE BUT ONE HAS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE KATANGANS LAUNCHED THEIR OFFENSIVE FROM ANGOLA EXTERIOR TO ZAIRE AND INNPIS HE SEES THE HAND OF THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS. NETO, BY ACCEPTING THE EXTENSIVE ASSISTANCE OF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS CANNOT HELP BUT DO THEIR BIDDING. THE CUBANS, ALTHOUGH BEHOLDEN TO THE SOVIETS AND PERHAPS USED BY THEM, NEVERTHELESS STILL KEEP ALIVE DREAMS OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP ALTHOUGH CHE GUEVARA IS GONE AND HERE HE CITED CUBAN ADVENTURES IN LATIN CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICA. CUBAN INTEREST IN ANGOLA DOES NOT CONSISTUTE A GENUINE CONCERN FOR AFRICANS. HE WANTED TO CAUTION THE U.S. NOT TO "LOSE" ANGOLA BECAUSE IT HAS GREAT ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE. IT IS VERY RICH. CONSEQUENTLY, HE URGED THE U.S. TO ENCOURAGE NIGERIA IN ITS MEDIATION EFFORTS.

4. WHEN ASKED IF HE FELT THAT LIBYA POSED A THREAT TO NIGER AS IT OBVIOUSLY DOES TO CHAD, HE REPLIED "YES". FIRST OF ALL, LIBYA IS "NOUVEUX RICHES," IT IS TRYING TO ACQUIRE ATOMIC WEAPONS AND "YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF MAN QADHAFI IS". HE VENTURED THAT QADHAFI DID NOT ATTEND THE SAHARAN SUMMIT (SEE REFTEL C) OUT OF PIQUE THAT KOUNTCHE WENT TO CAIRO. KOUNTCHE REFERRED TO HIS MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG AT KADUNA RECALLING THAT HE HAD ADVISED THE AMBASSADOR OF TH SOVIET INTEREST IN NIGERIA. AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S MEETING IN NIGERIA WAS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT TENDED TO HEAL

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND NIGERIA. IT IS
IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. MAINTAIN CLOSE AND FRIENDLY
TIES AS A COUNTER TO SOVIET INTEREST.

5. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT TRIES AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY
TO COMMUNICATE HIS CONCERN TO THE U.S. AND THE WEST
ABOUT A BROAD RANGE OF PROBLEMS IN AFRICA WHICH HE
SUGGESTS HAVE SOME COMMON THEMES. FIRST, THEY SEEM
TO PROVIDE THE CULTURE FOR THE GROWTH OF SOVIET
INFLUENCE AND INFILTRATION. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE
PROBLEMS ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY DISTANT, HE FEELS THEY
ARE VERY CLOSE TO NIGER AND THAT THE STABILITY
OF WEST AFRICA IS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND
STABILITY OF NIGER, THE STRATEGIC BUFFER BETWEEN
CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES, ECONOMIES AND POLITICAL
INTERESTS.

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6. AS I LEFT THE PRESIDENT, THE LIBYAN AMBASSADOR
WAS WAITING FOR HIS DELAYED APPOINTMENT. JAMES

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